

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE - CABINET

Cabinet will wish to note that these minutes, except those items in italics, will be published in week commencing 18th January 2021

**The Welsh Government
Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet
Wednesday 2nd December 2020
(Teams)**

Present: Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS (Chair)
Rebecca Evans MS
Vaughan Gething MS
Lesley Griffiths MS
Julie James MS
Eluned Morgan MS
Ken Skates MS
Kirsty Williams MS
Jeremy Miles MS

Hannah Blythyn MS
Jane Hutt MS
Julie Morgan MS
Dafydd Elis Thomas MS
Lee Waters MS

Officials: Shan Morgan, Permanent Secretary
Des Clifford, Director General Office of the First Minister
Carys Evans, Principal Private Secretary First Minister
Will Whiteley, Deputy Director, Cabinet Division
Toby Mason, Head of Strategic Communications
Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
Madeleine Brindley, Special Adviser
Alex Bevan, Special Adviser
Ian Butler, Special Adviser
Kate Edmunds, Special Adviser
Sarah Faye, Special Adviser
Paul Griffiths, Special Adviser
Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser
NR Special Adviser
Gareth Williams, Special Adviser
NR Special Adviser
Tom Woodward, Special Adviser
NR (minutes)
NR Cabinet Secretariat
NR, Specialist Policy Adviser
NR Specialist Adviser for Education Reform
Tracey Burke, Director General, Education and Public Services
Andrew Goodall, Director General, Health
Andrew Slade, Director General ESNR
Reg Kilpatrick, Director General COVID-19 Crisis Coordination
Rob Orford, Chief Scientific Adviser for Health
Dylan Hughes, First Legislative Counsel

Helen Lentle, Director Legal Services
Emma Watkins, Deputy Director Economic Policy
Tom Smithson, Deputy Director Restart
Liz Lalley, Deputy Director Recovery
Terry Kowal, Senior Legislative Counsel
Neil Buffin, Senior Lawyer

NR

 CMOs office
Craig Solomons, COVID Technical Advisory Cell

Item 1: COVID-19 travel restrictions

- 1.1 The First Minister advised Ministers that the purpose of the meeting was to consider whether travel restrictions should remain in place, and if so, the nature of such constraints.
- 1.2 Any restrictions relating to COVID-19 would be for the purpose of preventing, protecting against, controlling or providing a public health response to the incidence, spread of infection or contamination. There must be a threat to public health and the restrictions had to be proportionate in what they were intending to achieve.
- 1.3 The paper highlighted that the current Regulations placed restrictions on entering and leaving Wales, without a reasonable excuse, whilst allowing travel throughout Wales without any specific restriction. The justification for the restrictions on leaving or entering Wales was based predominantly on upward trends throughout the United Kingdom as well as the fact that there had been national restrictions in England. Travel between high and low incidence areas within Wales without restriction was permitted on the basis that the whole country had emerged from the Firebreak, and the evidence pointed towards the virus being seeded throughout the country, which made travel less significant in terms of virus transmission.
- 1.4 Evidence supported the policy assumption that international and domestic travel facilitated the spread of coronavirus, in particular the risk of new infections being seeded in areas of low-transmission.
- 1.5 Travel restrictions were part of an overall package of mitigations to reduce rates of community transmission and help lower the risk of exporting and importing cases from areas of high prevalence.

- 1.6 Therefore, it was proposed to restrict, by regulation, travel to and from areas at the equivalent to Tier 3 in England and Level 3 and above in Scotland and to seek to reduce, through advice in guidance, travel to and from Tier 2 / Level 2 regions or lower because of the risk of seeding the virus in those areas. Travellers would need to be aware of and follow any legal restrictions in the country and area to which they were travelling.
- 1.7 In addition, international travel restrictions would continue, but it was recommended that the enforcement of quarantine mechanisms options should be explored to ascertain whether it was possible to allow for more international travel.
- 1.8 Cabinet agreed the travel restrictions set out in the paper.
- 1.9 Ministers noted the timing of the regulations for the December restrictions, as outlined in the paper, and noted that the guidance would be published in advance of the legislation coming into force.

Item 2: Any other business

- 2.1 It was reported that the Government would be tabling a ‘take note’ motion for debate the following Tuesday, which would enable the Senedd to vote on the First Minister’s statement on the new national measures to protect public health and reduce the spread of coronavirus, in advance of the debate on the Regulations the following week.
- 2.2 Cabinet noted that a Written Statement outlining COVID-19 vaccine deployment in Wales had been issued earlier that day.